

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to voice my concerns about the proposed relaxation of media ownership rules under consideration at your next meeting. I strongly urge the Commission to read and carefully consider the many comments submitted by groups across the political spectrum who oppose further consolidation of media ownership.

The Commission should not take its proposed action on Monday because increased media consolidation would threaten our culture and democracy. The past several years has seen a dramatic consolidation in media ownership. Just a handful of companies now create the vast majority of what the American public sees and reads. This material, like the cultural products of any society, plays a great role in forming the collective psyche of the American public. Presently, that psyche is geared mostly toward consumption, which is driven by the hyper-consumerism of a culture that is dominated by a handful of corporations. Excessive consumerism debases our culture and dumbs-down our political discourse. As fewer and fewer companies dominate what we watch and hear, consumer values will crowd out other values. The current fare on the cable news channels is a prime example of this. So much air time, but so little information that might educate the public about how things work in American society today.

In sum, the risks to democracy of allowing so few companies to control so much of the cultural space are too great to allow further consolidation.

Additionally, a federal agency rule making is the wrong forum to make a decision of this magnitude. Though the FCC may have the proper delegated authority from Congress to make such changes, it should recognize the potential far-ranging impacts of this action on our culture and democracy and back down from any such dramatic plans. Congress, not an unelected agency, is the proper decision maker in this case.

Thank you,
Jacob Wittwer